

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE **Accountability and Autonomy Work Group** **August 11, 2014** **Meeting Notes**

Present: Anne Ritter and George Harad; Bob Lokken, Chair; Representative Donna Pence; Superintendent Gaylen Smyer (via teleconference)

Not present: Representative Reed DeMordaunt and Valerie Aker

Others present: Vera McCrink, Associate Administrator, , Division of Professional Technical Education; Carson Howell, Director of Research, State Board of Education; Marilyn Whitney and Tracie Bent, State Board of Education

Bob Lokken, Chair, called the meeting to order and reviewed the day's agenda.

Marilyn Whitney introduced Vera McCrink, Associate Administrator, Division of Professional Technical Education, to address the committee's questions concerning appropriate benchmarks for professional technical education (PTE) students for purposes of determining college/career readiness.

Ms. McCrink advised that she had surveyed the Technical College Leadership Council which is comprised of six technical college deans and asked them whether or not an SAT 500 is an appropriate measure. None had concerns because all of the scores that they currently review fall just below the SAT 500 benchmark. The deans all agreed that PTE students should be measured the same as academic students. The deans did ask, however, if an SAT 500 benchmark meant that placement standards would be raised for core courses, since the current placement scores fall in the 450-470 range for math and English language arts.

Ms. McCrink differentiated between placement and college admission which includes other measures such as high school grade point average, courses taken, etc. For placement, the SAT is scrutinized by the English and math departments to show competence that a student can be successful. A student earning an SAT 460 or 470 is considered competent without remediation and is allowed to sign up for core courses.

Anne Ritter expressed concern that the committee was proposing a standard of SAT 500 to define college/career readiness, when in practice, the colleges, universities and PTE institutions were viewing competency some 40 points lower. She did not want to see the committee set a standard that would label a school district as not meeting State standards, when in fact, they meet university standards. Superintendent Smyer agreed. Bob Lokken said that benchmarks should be reviewed and kept relevant.

Ms. McCrink suggested that the committee consider whether it is trying to measure college ready or an aspirational goal; another question to consider might be where is Idaho now and where the committee wants it to go.

Bob Lokken reported that a draft of Idaho's SAT number is not encouraging. At a district level, only 25% of districts produce SAT 500 scores. Roughly 54% of high school students go on to college and roughly 25-75% of them need remediation.

George Harad suggested that even though the same standard can be used for academic and PTE students, the SAT 500 standard may be too high, since a large number of districts are not meeting it. The objective is to encourage districts to perform better.

Carson Howell, Director of Research, State Board of Education (SBE) reported that the SAT 500 benchmark, utilized by the SBE, comes from the SAT College Board. Idaho has only used the SAT statewide for three years. A student receiving an SAT 500 score should have success – a 60% chance of a “B” or above. The College Board currently is gathering data and considering new cut scores for remediation. Idaho is doing the same for Idaho students which would provide the success rates of students going to Idaho schools. The SBE will be able determine the cut score for Idaho, which may be the same as the College Board, and those scores will be used for placement recommendations. Bob Lokken said that the technical work belongs with the SBE; the committee should say that the number should be evaluated to determine the score that provides the best understanding that a child is ready to go on to college and career. Everyone agreed. Mr. Lokken further stated that he would rather the SBE err on the high side, whether districts meet the standard or not, because high expectations encourage people to perform better.

Superintendent Smyer suggested that if a high school student earns an industry certificate, such as American Welding Society certification, the school should receive credit for “career ready.” Many jobs exist that earn good wages. Marilyn Whitney reported the SBE is reviewing prior learning and work experience toward certificate or degree programs. The SBE is encouraging dual credit, and PTE students are graduating high school with certificates and degrees, and stepping into careers. Bob Lokken questioned how the K-12 system would be measured in that case – education is to educate, not prepare industry workers. Marilyn Whitney said that, while the State goal is 60% certificate or degree, the other 40% might receive an industry certificate, and they are more likely to go back to school later.

Bob Lokken recommended that the question of industry certificates be directed back to the SBE. His preference is that K-12 exists for education, not preparing for a specific job, and not the first job a person obtains. Young adults need to be life-long learners. Representative Pence and Anne Ritter agreed. While industry programs keep students engaged, they need to be prepared with fundamentals to move forward.

Marilyn Whitney advised that Don Soltman had reported for the Structure & Governance committees at the Annual Superintendents Conference on August 7, 2014. Some superintendents expressed concern at eliminating alternative schools from school ratings.

Superintendent Smyer suggested that instead of a “barnacle” committee to review rules, streamline implementation, and provide resources for schools, a permanent position at the SBE or SDE might be more effective. That person could convene committees as needed to address PTE concerns; review, monitor and fix systems; hold listening meetings; and facilitate collaboration between cohort districts. A permanent position would provide continuity. Marilyn Whitney responded that the SBE does have a committee, largely inactive, known as the Accountability Oversight Committee, standing and ad hoc, staffed by an Accountability Program Manager. The SBE is in the process of hiring for that position, which has a job description that could be enlarged. Anne Ritter noted that it is not the task of this committee to say how the SBE should be staffed, but to stress the need for an ongoing task.

George Harad said that the committee’s recommendations need to encourage a cultural change. The job of the SBE is to make districts successful, not to direct or control, but to support. Having a position that furthers constant communication between district and Board would demonstrate the willingness of the State to be more helpful. The committee can provide examples: a list of rules which are not useful; and the observations that systems do not work as intended, such as ISEE. Tracie Bent said that the Data Management Council was intended to oversee ISEE from the beginning, and hopes that this committee’s recommendations will help. The SDE has been protective of their ability to manage ISEE; however, the SBE requires reporting.

Marilyn Whitney said that a yearly exercise of combing through statutes is not realistic; three years would be better. Everyone needs to be more aware of the ramifications of rules and legislation and how the pieces work with others. Anne Ritter proposed, “We recommend that legislators understand implications to districts, the SBE and the SDE for personnel costs and reporting requirements for all legislation before it is passed and that it be reevaluated after three years to determine effectiveness.” The phrase “No fiscal impact” is a glaring omission. Representative Pence agreed, and added that legislators have difficulty getting more effective costs. Bob Lokken agreed that an “impact assessment” be studied with a prospective look at effect, rather than a post-mortem, such as those that the Office of Performance Evaluations conducts.

Marilyn Whitney’s team will work on the final report and send it out for review.